

LATIMER STUDIES

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THE EVANGELICAL  
ANGLICAN  
IDENTITY PROBLEM  
an analysis

J I Packer





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EVANGELICAL ANGLICAN  
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AN ANALYSIS

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## 1. A DIFFICULTY OF DEFINITION

LET me begin with some brooding. Am I an evangelical? Certainly, since the days when as an undergraduate I was converted and nurtured in a University Christian Union, and introduced to a lively Anglican evangelical church in the process, I have thought I was. When I learned of the evangelical tradition in history, as seen in men like Augustine; the Reformers; the Puritans; Edwards, Whitefield and Wesley; Ryle, Spurgeon, Finney, Moody and Hudson Taylor in the last century, and more recently B. B. Warfield and C. T. Studd, I believed myself to identify with all the main things they had stood for, and accordingly lined myself up with the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions (now the Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship) and the 'definite' evangelicals in the Church of England. A curacy in a black-gown church, and two decades of organizing the annual Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference at Westminster Chapel, served only to strengthen this commitment. In 1958, in 'Fundamentalism and the Word of God', I argued that 'evangelicals' was the proper name for those whose critics were calling them 'fundamentalists', and as one of those to whom James Barr in his recent trying book Fundamentalism applies the old label I say the same today. To me, the 'vibes' of the word 'evangelical' are wholly good and its meaning is wholly positive; I think it is an honour to a man to be so called, and I would not wish ever to be described or referred to in any other way.

But in the seventies individual evangelicals both orally and in print have questioned my right to bear the name, for the following reasons (as I understand them).

First, in 1970 I was one of two evangelicals who wrote a book called Growing into Union along with two 'catholic' spokesmen, Professor E. L. Mascall and the present Bishop of Truro (then of Willesden). Though we all could and did endorse all that the book said, we were acting on the principle which Francis Schaeffer calls 'co-belligerence' - that is, we made common cause on particular issues without committing ourselves to agree beyond that point. Schaeffer rightly distinguishes co-belligerence from compromise, but some saw this venture of cooperation as intrinsically compromising, and at least one journal later told the world that in virtue of it I could not be regarded as an evangelical any longer.

Second, Growing into Union urged that the historic episcopate in its developed form, though not necessary to the church's existence or to the adequacy of its spiritual experience and pastoral care in any particular case, has positive value as a sign of Christ's continuing ministry to his people, and therefore of the church's own unity, continuity and continuing identity by reason of Christ's minis-

try; so it ought to be retained by the Church of England, and commended in these terms to non-episcopal churches. That was and is my opinion. Most Anglican evangelicals, however, have hitherto approved diocesan episcopacy, insofar as they have approved it at all, merely on pragmatic grounds, as an institution of proved pastoral worth, and they have declined to see any distinctive theological significance in it. Though I have been privileged to watch a number of bishops ministering superbly, as good stewards of their episcopal prerogatives, I confess I should find it hard to vindicate this pragmatic warrant for episcopacy against the pragmatic counter-argument in the Dissident View appended to the 1959 Anglican-Methodist report, and in the late Ian Henderson's Power without Glory: namely, that on balance, taking a broad view of its record over more than a millennium and a half, the historic episcopate appears as so tainted an institution that it is not worth trying to reclaim; and to ask non-episcopal churches to accept it as a price they must pay for union or even full communion with the Church of England is an offensive impertinence. The argument that existing episcopacy should be reformed and retained, rather than abolished and replaced, because of its long-standing significance as a sign of something important, seems to me not only sound in itself but also the only viable answer to this contention. But I have been told that my doctrine of episcopacy is 'higher' than Anglican evangelicals hold, so that my continued right to call myself an evangelical is doubtful.

Third, the declaration of the gospel in Growing into Union, despite our strong stress on justification by faith, was criticized by some (not, I think, Anglicans) as unevangelical because sacramentalist. The point here, however, seemed to be that the critics held a pseudo-Zwinglian 'bare sign', as opposed to 'efficacious sign', view of baptism and the Lord's supper, and thought that all other evangelicals did too, and had not reckoned with the fact that the Anglican confessional position, like that set forth in Calvin's Institutes, is less negative than this. I think it is clear from the Institutes that Calvin would not have found fault with Growing into Union at this point. (But then, was he an evangelical? Some hold views which imply that he was only half-way to being one.)

Fourth, I was a member of the now-defunct Doctrine Commission which produced the report Christian Believing, an exercise in interpretative description (phenomenology) rather than in normative thinking. This report, which has the character of a graceful guide to a confused noise, was a bitter disappointment to many, including some of its authors; but it was all that a body more or less equally divided between 'rads' and 'trads' could produce, and as information about what different folk do and do not believe and why, it has its own modest use. I have been told, however, that no signatory of the report can be regarded any more as an evangelical, since critical normative theology is all that an evangelical will ever allow

himself to engage in, and Christian Believing is certainly not that. All reviews of the report which I saw in evangelical journals treated it as if it ought to be normative, and were therefore more or less hostile, as was natural. One of these mistaken reviews censured me by name, and when I wrote to set the record straight the editor would not print my letter.

Fifth, it has been said by some in recent years that evangelicals believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, and on this basis reject as contrary to Scripture all forms of the theory of evolution. I believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, and maintain it in print, but exegetically I cannot see that anything Scripture says, in the first chapters of Genesis or anywhere else, bears on the biological theory of evolution one way or the other. On that theory itself, as a non-scientist, watching from a distance the disputes of the experts, I suspend judgment, but I recall that B. B. Warfield was a theistic evolutionist. If on this account I am not an evangelical, then neither was he.

Sixth, it is also claimed, against me among others, that no Anglican, not even a Bible-believing five-point Calvinist who cares for evangelism like myself, can be called an evangelical without qualification, since evangelical principles require that church membership be limited to those who credibly profess orthodox evangelical faith, whereas the Church of England is doctrinally mixed and embraces many who could not identify themselves as evangelicals in this way. This is tantamount to claiming that all true evangelicals are committed to Baptist or Congregationalist church principles, as these were universally held from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, which seems a bold thing to say; but one still hears it said.

The purpose of these reminiscences is to make the point that anyone who proposes to define the word 'evangelical' must go carefully. Sectarian influences, counselling various forms of exclusiveness, and shibboleths deriving from partisan memories, sometimes remote, can creep in on the one hand to narrow the definition unduly; on the other hand, desire to claim the word, with all its good vibrations, can produce definitions of undue vagueness ('low church', 'emphasizing personal experience', etc.); and honest differences of opinion as to what evangelical faith allows and rules out on secondary matters are doubtless inescapable in any case. And if one attempts a strictly historical definition there are still pitfalls. 'Evangelical' as a term of identification was first used by Lutherans in Reformation days. By the nineteenth century it was being applied generally to any people or activities, both Anglican and non-conformist, that stood in line with the eighteenth century awakening and its offshoots, the movement which by then was being called the Evangelical Revival. The word 'evangelicalism' was coined at that time to signify the style of Christianity which evangelicals embraced, with its doctrine, experience and practical priorities -

that is, its theology, spirituality and policy. For a century and more it has been understood that to be an evangelical is to identify with all three. But evangelical theology, spirituality and policy have never been quite homogeneous. This is because two distinguishable streams of tradition have flowed together to create the evangelical identity, without ever perfectly merging, and different evangelicals both in and outside the Church of England stand in one stream rather than the other. One is the confessional, churchly, anti-Roman Catholic Protestantism of the sixteenth century, with its passion for revealed truth and its strong intellectual, theological and cultural drive. The other is the pietism which emerged within Protestant state churches in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, pacific and intellectually unenterprising, but with a passion for vital spiritual experience. Pietism reacted against spiritual deadness and stressed personal faith, rebirth, soul-culture and informal fellowship. The 'keen' group (ecclesia in ecclesia), the little church within the church, or a Society of Moravian or Methodist type, or an informal gathering in a home for prayer or Bible searching or sharing experience) was its main structure, and evangelism in one form or another was its prime concern. Pietism, no less than national Protestantism, saw itself as the true heir of the Reformation, and evangelicalism has developed as a blend of the two streams; but individuals, groups and churches vary considerably as to where in the total flow they stand.

Yet these differences must not be overstressed. On fundamentals all evangelicals are at one. Thus, all evangelicalism is based on the doctrines of the Trinity; Christ's deity; the correlation of grace and faith; justification by faith through Christ's substitutionary atonement; Christ's physical resurrection and present reign; new birth and progressive sanctification through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit; the church as the fellowship of all believers; and the certainty of Christ's personal return. Also, all evangelicalism rests, from a formal and methodological standpoint, on the final authority of Holy Scripture - for (says Loraine Boettner in Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p. 200) 'when this tenet is granted the other doctrines of the evangelical faith follow as a matter of course.' Also, all evangelicalism sees evangelism as a constant priority for the church, and maintains a Christ-centred spirituality in which fellowship with the risen Lord by faith is central. Such differences as evangelicals have on doctrine (e.g., Calvinism and Arminianism; covenant theology and dispensationalism; pre-, post- and non-millennialism; paedobaptism and believer's baptism), and on experience (e.g., whether the 'second blessing' in its Wesleyan, Keswick or Pentecostal form is a norm; whether 'charismatic' experience, e.g., glossolalic prayer and prophecy, should be sought or not), and on practice (e.g., methods of evangelism, and ways of socio-cultural community involvement) are secondary and, so to speak, within the family. So are the noticeable differences between



congregations in the rate at which, and the extent to which, they respond to cultural change and the shifting preoccupations of folk around them. These differences may cause strain on the surface, but evangelical unity is a reality wherever these biblical principles of faith and life are truly acknowledged. It is in terms of these principles that evangelicalism ought to be defined.

BEFORE offering a definition, however, it will be worth while to reflect briefly on two questions, both of which arise naturally from what has been said and bear directly on today's situation. The first is, why English evangelicals should be so ready to censure each other and divide from each other when differences of theological opinion emerge. Is it mere natural cantankerousness, or what? The second question is, why Anglican evangelicals should have an identity problem at all at the present time. Are they under some kind of inner strain, or is there an external reason?

### A conscience about truth

To the first question, the answer is that the sensitive reactions of English evangelicals to apparent shifts from orthodoxy within their own ranks expresses something basic to the evangelical mentality - namely, the sense of being entrusted with revealed truth, and of having a steward's responsibility to keep the deposit intact. Evangelicalism everywhere is the religion of a biblically-informed conscience. Private judgment, as evangelicals inculcate it, has to do not with the layman's luxury of disagreeing with the organised church, but with the universal necessity of agreeing with the Bible, and therefore with the universal duty of doing as the Bereans did and searching the Scriptures to see whether what men say in God's name is really so (Acts 17.11). One thing which Scripture emphasizes is the Christian's responsibility to hold fast and profess consistently the teaching God has given, whatever inducements and pressures there may be to let it go. Paul, John and the writer to the Hebrews highlight this responsibility, both by teaching it directly and by risking the personal odium of actively challenging particular doctrinal errors. The tolerant indifference which reflects belief that there are no revealed truths and no given certainties, so that no finality can attach to any biblical or post-biblical formulations, and therefore Christianity must be viewed as essentially a life rather than a doctrine, is as far as possible from the evangelical outlook. The authentic evangelical mind is angularly dogmatic, just because the archetypal Christian instruction given in the New Testament is itself so. In his book The Christian Mind, Harry Blamires, an Anglican catholic, argues that the marks of a Christian mind are six: its supernatural orientation, its awareness of evil, its conception of truth as objective and absolute, its acceptance of authority, its concern for persons and the personal dimensions of life, and its sacramental cast, seeing earth's aspirations and joys as

pointers to God and heaven. Evangelicals agree, and recognise that such a mind is essentially dogmatic in the double sense of both receiving and affirming Christian dogma. Christians are stewards of truth, and must fulfil their ministry by upholding it in face of error that would destroy it or vagueness and compromise that would blur it. This, as evangelicals view the matter, is an integral part of the service which Christians must render to their Lord.

So when brother evangelicals dismissed me from the particular involvements I had with them, thinking I had betrayed the faith of the gospel, and when Francis Schaeffer at Lausanne (1974) and Harold Lindsell in Battle for the Bible (1976) blew the whistle on the diminished view of Holy Scripture with which some American evangelicals appeared to have taken up, though the gestures were disruptive and their appropriateness could be questioned, they were authentic expressions of an active evangelical conscience, with its consuming, God-taught passion not to lose any God-given truth. They were gestures to respect, therefore, even if one should conclude they were mistaken.

This century has seen wide use in both the Church of England and the larger Protestant churches of the U.S.A. of the distinction between 'liberal' and 'conservative' evangelicalism. This distinction, which 'conservative' evangelicals did not draw and which, as usually expounded, seems to them inaccurate (for anyone who inclines to what is usually called 'liberal' theology is to that extent not an evangelical at all), seems originally to have been meant to express the Gilbertian view that in Christianity, as in politics, the basic differences are less of conviction than of temperament and habit of mind, since 'every child that's born into this world alive is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative'. Certainly, the 'conservative' evangelical is regularly stereotyped as one whose roots are in the past, not the present, and whose thinking looks back theologically to 'the good old days' of the Reformers, Puritans and their eighteenth- and nineteenth century successors, while the 'liberal' evangelical, not carrying the same weight of traditional intellectual luggage, is seen as free, in a way that his opposite number is not, to adjust to current movements of thought and to recast his theology into new forms. In any case, according to stereotype, the liberal's basic loyalty is to the figure of Jesus Christ rather than to any particular dogmatic assertions that the Bible makes about him. The implication is that the same would be true for the 'conservative' also, were it not that his backward-looking timidity or conventionality of mind keeps him from seeing this point. During the past half-century able, warm-hearted, vigorous 'liberal' evangelicals have given much to the world church. Yet in holding to a hermeneutic which sees man's witness to God in Holy Scripture as in the last analysis a little less than God's own witness to himself, 'liberals' fall short of the authentic evangelical

conscience and sense of responsibility regarding revealed doctrine. Those called 'conservatives' (who prefer to call themselves evangelicals with no qualifying adjective) go beyond the 'liberals' in urging that loyalty to Christ entails accepting the Bible from his hand, as it were, as the infallible guidance of Father, Son and Spirit for Christian belief and behaviour, and holding through thick and thin to everything that it sets forth. The difference that this makes is considerable.

Here, however, evangelicals need to be self-critical, for the authentic evangelical concern for revealed truth can itself be corrupted by motivations much murkier than a pure desire to see the church faithful to God and fruitful among men.

Thus, fear of being scoffed at or swamped, and the defensiveness that is born of the memory of past roastings for our views, can work in us an obstinate, blinkered, suspicious and rigid immobility ('our doctrine, right or wrong; and if Scripture said that Jonah swallowed the whale I'd believe it!'): and this attitude falls far short of being a responsible stewardship of truth. The White Queen may have learned to believe six impossible things before breakfast, but that is not an art which Christians are required to master, for we do not honour God by believing absurdities. Again, 'domino' theories charting the expected course of apostasy ('let this point go, and all Christianity will fall') spring naturally from the fear-ridden mind. Without for a moment suggesting that such Cassandra-cries are never justified, it has to be said that their intensity is not always the measure of their realism, nor is scaremongering always a sign of deep spirituality.

Pride, too, can betray here. Christians learn from Scripture to understand their calling in remnant terms - that is, to recognize that the church, which was itself originally the authentic remnant of genealogical Israel, may, like Israel after the flesh, lapse in part, so that at any time on major issues of godliness the Christian may find himself in relative isolation, or standing with only a few, like the faithful few of Sardis (Revelation 3. 4). Discipleship to the once-isolated Christ requires of us readiness for this. But there is a carnal counterpart to remnant thinking, and that is sectarian pride, which much too cheerfully accepts and even courts isolation, waiving the attempt to (in Jude's words) 'convince some, who doubt; save some, by snatching them out of the fire' (Jude 22 f.). Such withdrawal into the backwaters and backwoods of obscurity may look heroic to the casual gaze, but, like other forms of censorious stand-offishness, it may have at its heart nothing more respectable than the exclusiveness of C. S. Lewis' 'inner ring' - the fewer we are together, the merrier we shall be. Furthermore, the siege mentality that comes of being, and feeling, threatened can produce an unhealthy passion for uniformity among those who are seen as defenders of truth's beleaguered citadel, and a ruthless readiness to

brand as traitors any who are thought to have stepped out of line. Obscurely but potently the feeling emerges that external pressures forbid indulgence of any kind of eccentricity, and that those who do not see this are for that very reason a danger best destroyed.

Again, loyalty to 'the standard of teaching to which you were committed' (Rom. 6.17) is a duty and a virtue, but it can easily be corrupted into a rationalistic self-sufficiency which will not allow that there is anything to be learned from Scripture which evangelicals do not already know, or that any biblical truth could be made clearer by expressing it in different words from those which evangelicals now use. Any who lapse into this intellectual perfectionism will be sharp, no doubt, against their brothers who go into dialogue about divine things in hope that new insights into the meaning of Scripture will come to them from their non-evangelical partners.

Yet intellectual self-sufficiency must be judged a delusion that damages (because it limits) those who embrace it, and it is worth a great deal of self-scrutiny to ensure that neither you nor I become its victim.

With these caveats, however, the evangelical principle of venerating (not worshipping, but revering) the Bible as source, medium and touchstone of revealed truth, and of challenging and censuring views, even when held by professed evangelicals, that seem not to do justice to the Bible, ought to be vindicated and sustained; and if the impression left is of an unlovely quarrelsomeness, it must be urged that sensitivity about doctrine is fundamentally a healthy thing, and it is better that misjudgments be made out of zeal for truth than that men should be able to live in peace because that zeal is lacking.

#### A commitment to the Church

To the second question, why Anglican evangelicals should have an identity problem at this time, the answer is that the past generation has seen more change in the Church of England than at any time since the Reformation, and this, plus the new patterns of cooperation whereby resurgent Anglican evangelicalism has shared in making the alterations, has left in the minds of both Anglican and non-Anglican evangelicals a fear that the accumulation of particular changes, and the throwing of so many established procedures into the melting-pot, may have affected the character of Anglican evangelicalism more than Anglican evangelicals themselves are aware. So there is a good deal of sharp questioning from evangelicals outside the Church of England, and a good deal of heart-searching among those within it.

To be more specific. Since the middle of the century the Church of England has adopted new canons, a new formula of clerical subscription, and new alternative services, differing in both content and style from those of 1662. It has introduced synodical government. It has

centralized finance and reorganized the parishes by amalgamation of parishes and closure of churches to an unprecedented degree. It has talked unity (which is not identical with union, though some never draw the distinction) both with the main Free Churches and in a preliminary way with Roman Catholics. It has diversified ministry by introducing clerical groups and teams, by establishing a supporting, non-stipendiary class of presbyters, and by smiling on experiments with pastoral and leadership groups of laymen working with incumbents. In the middle of all this, at the Keele Congress of 1967 a representative thousand evangelicals, half clergy and half laity, conscious of their new vitality, leadership and academic strength, committed themselves henceforth to accept the Church's problems and concerns as their own and to contribute as positively as they could in every part of the Church's ongoing life. This pledge of new involvement closed a generation-long chapter of evangelical detachment. Most Anglican evangelicals since 1967 have moved the Keele way, and the Nottingham Congress of 1977 shows them at least trying still to do so.

What Keele meant for evangelicals was spelt out in advance by Peter Johnston in his chairman's address to the Islington Conference some weeks before the Congress met. 'The Church of England is changing ... Evangelicals in the Church of England are changing too. Not in doctrinal conviction (for the truth of the gospel cannot change) but (like any healthy child) in stature and posture. It is a tragic thing ... that Evangelicals have a very poor image in the Church as a whole. We have acquired a reputation for narrow partisanship and obstructionism ... We need to repent and to change ... I for one desire to be rid of all sinful "party spirit". Evangelical is not a party word ...' What Peter Johnston desired, and Keele pledged, has largely become fact; evangelicals today are more deeply involved in the inner life of the Church of England than ever before, and the old days of entrenched 'party' isolationism are gone.

But, as we said, this change has raised questions. The old pre-war ethos of parochial aloofness - established independency, maintained by the parson's freehold and trust patronage, with minimal diocesan links - is no more. The old symbols of evangelical identity - north side; no stole or candles exclusive use of 1662 worship forms; the eschewing of tobacco, alcohol and the cinema; deep dog-collars; etc. - are now mostly things of the past. The language of Zion, that spiritual Swahili made up from the Authorized Version and the old hymns, which Anglican and non-Anglican evangelicals once spoke in just about the same way, has given place to several distinct dialects, based apparently on different modern versions of Scripture and agreeing only in addressing God as 'you' rather than 'thou'. Pressure of time on evangelical clergy and laity as they work out their deepened commitment to the Church of England means that they now have much more to do with other Anglicans than with non-Anglican evangelicals. The Church of

England currently makes gestures towards the Roman Catholic Church that are more friendly and forthcoming than ever before, yet evangelicals seem not to worry as their fathers would have worried. The rumbling hiccups and fumbling pickups on doctrinal points which were sometimes noticeable at Nottingham confirmed suspicions that, whatever else evangelical clergy had been doing since Keele, they had not been spending their strength drilling folk in basic evangelical principles as their fathers used to do.

What does all this add up to? What does it mean? What does it show? Are Anglican evangelicals what they were? Anglican evangelicals say they are changing as truth and the times together require, but non-Anglican evangelicals, many of whom retain almost all the outward style of their own spiritual fathers and grandfathers, tend to urge that the changes which Anglicans currently accept mark a radical erosion of their evangelicalism, so that soon it will be a mere featureless blob, like the ruined, unrecognisable face of a weatherbeaten gargoyle. Also, they urge, it is already clear that from being Anglican evangelicals, men who found their deepest identity in their evangelical faith as such, they have now become evangelical Anglicans, finding their deepest identity in their denomination as such, and this surely is defecation. Some Anglicans, hearing this, are unimpressed, but others are troubled. They are anxious that the accusation should be false, but fear that it may be a truer bill than they or their leaders realise. Could it be that the non-Anglican spectators are seeing most of the Church of England game?

The Anglican evangelical identity problem is rooted in these facts and fears. What is in question is where Anglican evangelicals think they are going, what they are taking with them of their former convictions, and what policies their present outlook may suggest or allow; and whether, in the light of the answer to these three enquiries, it is proper to go on calling them evangelicals at all. My present purpose is to speak to this question, or complex of questions, and to do so in a prescriptive and persuasive way rather than just descriptively - that is, I want to spell out ideals, and urge what I think should be, rather than limit myself to chronicling what is. After all, since evangelicals, like other Christians, are at best imperfectly sanctified sinners, actual evangelicalism, whether Anglican or non-Anglican, like every other Christian movement, will always appear as an imperfect product which at its best is leaving what is behind to press on to what lies ahead, prayerfully resolved by God's grace to do better tomorrow than yesterday. So one renders truer service to evangelicalism by trying to refocus its goals and standards in the light of grace than by personating the law in criticism of its present state. That is the service I shall try to render now.

As a first step, I offer an account of essential evangelicalism which will, I hope, commend itself as a true and adequate frame of reference for the rest of the discussion.



### 3. THE ANATOMY OF EVANGELICALISM

THE following paragraphs sketch out evangelicalism in the ideal terms in which evangelicals themselves see it. How far in practice any of us realise this ideal, whether in our church or interdenominational groupings or in our personal lives, is a separate question, on which I do not attempt to pronounce. But, whether we manage to be good evangelicals or only bad ones, the ideal seems fairly clear, and fairly well agreed wherever groups taking to themselves the evangelical name are found. My analysis involves four general claims which focus the evangelical self-understanding and six particular beliefs which, though each belonging (as evangelicals think) to mainstream Christianity, and thus as far from eccentricity as possible, add up together to a position that is quite distinctive in the world church.

The first claim is that evangelicalism is practical Christianity, a matter of total discipleship whereby human beings with all their powers become wholly subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine-human mediator, in all the glory of his person, place and saving work. In other words, evangelicalism is not just a theology, or a spirituality, or a plan of action, but is all these three blended together in a 'principles' life-style which embraces relationships with God, with men and with ourselves both in private and in public, at home, at work, in church and across the board in society.

The strong personal disciplines and restraints of the evangelical life-style have sometimes made it appear as a kind of monasticism outside the cloister, and certainly forsaking the world in the sense of renouncing 'worldliness', that is, the world's way, and consenting to swim culturally against the stream, is a theme which has always had prominence in evangelical devotional teaching.

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,  
If thou wouldst my disciple be;  
Deny thyself, the world forsake,  
And humbly follow after me

- these words of C. W. Everest, often on evangelical lips, express an insight into the meaning of Christianity which is basic to the evangelical outlook. Evangelicals are clear that without commitment to the living Christ against the world, with readiness for conflict anywhere and everywhere, you cannot be an evangelical, for you cannot be a Christian at all. Yet it must be stressed that in their opposition to the world evangelicals, following Scrip-

ture (cf. 1 John 2.15f.), are opposing not what is natural, but what is sinful. Evangelicals may pitch their tents within a hair's breadth of Manicheism (after all, Manicheism really does couch at the door for all who have noticed that the New Testament rates this era evil, cf. Galatians 1.3), but, like the prospector's hut in Chaplin's The Gold Rush, evangelicalism never quite falls into the abyss on whose edge it teeters. There are no areas of created life whose goodness it does not affirm, or which it dismisses as unredeemable, just as there are no created joys, intellectual or sensuous, which it hesitates to sanctify. Though the pietistic streak in the make-up of evangelicalism has sometimes led to narrow and negative thinking about the social and cultural implications of biblical faith, a breadth of positive concern for what life in this rich and varied world can become by grace, and a sense of responsible Christian stewardship in social and cultural matters, is more deep-rooted in the tradition, and has been so since Calvin's day at least.

The second claim is that evangelicalism is pure Christianity. This claim, be it said, is voiced not as a conceited boast, but as a humble confession made in gratitude by Christians who see the value of what they have received. Purity, doctrinal, ecclesiastical and ethical, was a major concern of the Reformers and Puritans, and evangelicals today think of reformation and revival in terms of restoring pure Christianity. They claim that in principle, if not always (alas) in practice, evangelicalism is pure Christianity as such, free from accretions and dilutions. The claim is admittedly bold, but, as they think, necessary, because true.

So when Anglican evangelicals 'make their contribution', as the saying is, to the larger Anglican mix, they do so in the belief that hereby they are privileged to call the whole Church into paths of faithful obedience and spiritual renewal. And when evangelicals of any denomination are invited to see their theology as one strand or fragment of truth needing to be set in a larger ecumenical framework they demur, humbly but firmly insisting that, on the contrary, evangelical theology itself provides the framework into which all biblical insights should be fitted, and that any deviating from this framework will be to that extent a deviating from Christianity. Evangelicals see all theological truth as belonging by right to evangelical theology, and evangelical theology as belonging by right to the whole Christian church.

But what are the criteria of 'pure' Christianity? All evangelicals would, I think, answer this question first by identifying pure Christianity as the consistent living out of pure Christian beliefs, and second by appealing to Paul's negative and positive criteria of pure belief. The negative criterion is no intrusion of human wisdom or works into our understanding of God's salvation, but total openness to, and dependence on, what God reveals to us in his Word and what he does for us in his grace (see 1 Corinthians

1-2; Colossians 1-3; Galatians 3-5; Romans). The positive criterion is that the dignity and role of Christ the mediator who in his threefold office as prophet, priest and king is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, peace, life and hope in person (see 1 Corinthians 1. 30; Ephesians 2. 14; Colossians 3. 4; 1 Timothy 1. 1), should be adequately acknowledged. In thus seeking to avoid both extraneous matter which would distort the good news and shoddy formulations which would tarnish or trivialize it, evangelicalism understands itself as 'mere Christianity', and will, with Paul, enter into strenuous polemics to maintain its point of view.

Thus, in the sixteenth-century Reformation conflict its concerns came to be crystallized in five motto phrases each containing the word only (Latin, solus) - sola Scriptura, solo Christo, sola fide, sola gratia, solī Deo gloria (by Scripture only; by Christ only; by faith only; by grace only; glory to God only). The thoughts which these slogans expressed were that we know God through Scripture alone, by attending to what is written and eschewing speculations which in claiming to supplement biblical teaching would actually relativize it; that we are saved through Christ's mediation and his blood shed for us, and have no other source of hope; that we are justified through faith in Christ alone apart from our works; that we are saved, first to last, by God's loving initiative and power alone, not by our own endeavour; and that praise for our salvation must be given to God alone, none of the credit being due to us. Given the framework of Trinitarian belief and the awareness that the created order is the theatre of God's redemptive action, the renewing of creation being redemption's goal, these five beliefs are still the backbone of pure Christianity as evangelicals understand it.

Before moving on, we should notice that with the claim to purity goes a claim to finality, based on the insight that you cannot add to Christian faith, thus understood, without subtracting from it. By augmenting it, you necessarily impoverish it. Should you, for example, add to it a doctrine of human priestly mediation, or of angelic mediation, as the Colossians did, you would obscure the perfect adequacy of the mediatorial ministry which Christ fulfils. Should you add a doctrine of human merit alongside Christ's merit, as in effect the Galatians did, you would effectively deny the perfect adequacy of Christ's righteousness and blood-shedding as the ground of our pardon and acceptance. Should you add the thought that the essence of Holy Communion is in some sense, symbolic or real, the sacrificing of Christ and of ourselves in him, you would crowd out the knowledge that the central action in Holy Communion is receiving Christ and his benefits through faith in the 'visible word' of the sacramental sign. The principle applies across the board; at every point in our relationship with God, evangelical theology sets 'Christ only' in opposition to all forms of religious self-

assertion, whether theological, ecclesiastical or devotional. What is more than evangelical is thus less than evangelical. Evangelical belief, by its very nature, cannot be supplemented, only denied. The insights of other theologies can be set in an evangelical framework without loss, and to their own great advantage, but the basic convictions of evangelical theology cannot be set in another framework without their meaning being so changed as to be effectively lost.

The third claim made is that evangelicalism is unitive Christianity. Sometimes evangelicals are thought to be sectarian in spirit, or weak in their view of the church, because for over a century their interdenominational fellowship structures, local and worldwide, have seemed to command more of their love and loyalty than do their own denominations. But this is a mistake. The evangelical will certainly say that his prime commitment is to the worldwide evangelical brotherhood as such, and that he is closer to evangelicals outside his own denominational family than he can be to members of his own church who deny or query basics of his faith. What this reflects, however, is not schismatic individualism or sectarian instincts, but the evangelical ecumenical vision: for what evangelicals have desired ever since the conflicts of the sixteenth century is reformation and renewal throughout the world church on the basis and by the means of evangelical theology.

Evangelicals since Calvin and Cranmer have longed to see world Christian unity: meaning by unity agreement in the faith, plus mutual love, plus a welcome at the Lord's Table to all believers in good standing in any part of the church, plus cooperation in maintaining and spreading the gospel. But evangelicals today, facing the confused half-belief which at present pervades most of the older and larger Protestant churches, find it necessary to insist on something which their Reformation forebears could take for granted - namely, that it is gospel truth, rather than formal denominational links, that must fix the bounds of fellowship and determine just how much Christian closeness can be realised, and how much cooperation practised, in any given situation. Evangelicals see fellowship in the gospel - confessional fellowship, whereby we celebrate each other's faithful stewardship of God's truth - as the first form of ecumenism, out of which every other element grows; and they hope for a day when the worldwide church, taught and moved by the Spirit of God himself, will come to share this fellowship. Their attitude follows directly from their valuation of the faith which they received, as they believe, from God. From within the World Council of Churches one sometimes hears it said that the church must let the world write its agenda for mission, but the World Council itself claims the prerogative of writing the church's agenda for ecumenism, and because evangelicals quarrel with items on that agenda they are constantly stereotyped as anti-ecumenical. The truth is, however, that evangelicals quarrel with the W.C.C. agenda

because they have a different ecumenical vision - one to which unity in evangelical faith is fundamental.

To live consistently in terms of this vision is not easy, as evangelical Anglicans in particular keep finding. Consistency prompts them to call themselves Anglican evangelicals rather than evangelical Anglicans, to show that it is the gospel as such, rather than the Anglican heritage as such, which determines their Christian identity and directs their practice of Christian fellowship. (In fact, they see a massive overlap between the gospel and the Anglican heritage, which is why they remain Anglicans, even enthusiastic Anglicans, despite all their discontents with Anglicanism at present; but the biblical gospel and the Anglican tradition are at least formally distinct.) Fellow-Anglicans, however, sometimes interpret their attitude as showing looseness of Anglican allegiance. Consistency also requires them to pursue a bilateral policy of cooperative association with evangelicals in other denominations, alongside constructive reforming involvement in their own; and Free Church evangelicals sometimes construe this bilateralism as a sign that their Anglican brethren wish they were out of the Church of England but lack the guts to leave. Some Free Church evangelicals go on to argue that by staying in the same denominational framework as this or that unorthodox clergyman Anglican evangelicals become guilty of his heresies - guilty, not by personal affirmation, but by association and acquiescence. However unjustifiable in itself, this guilt-by-association argument may do good under God by rousing Anglican evangelicals to yet more vigorous debate against misbelief, but it is for all that hard to bear.

Yet the vision remains valid. The evangelical goal of unity in faith is in principle practical politics. Evangelicals appeal, and teach others to appeal, to Holy Scripture as God's standard, and they employ an analogy-of-Scripture hermeneutic which assumes the coherence of the biblical message and lets one passage illuminate another. On this basis genuine agreement on matters of faith is possible. Indeed, it is actual; the stability over four and a half centuries of international evangelical belief on all essentials of the faith (including the important tenet that no particular church order is an essential of the faith) is so remarkable that it goes far to confirm the claim that here in truth is the doctrinal core of Christianity. By contrast, Christians who do not follow this method of determining beliefs, but rely instead on Christian tradition criticized more or less radically by Christian reason, are unlikely ever to reach stable agreement among themselves.

The fourth claim is that evangelicalism is rational Christianity. This needs highlighting, for the pietistic and charismatic preoccupation with experience, and the grotesque rationalistic

obscurantism of some 'fundamentalist' writing on God and his ways (mainly American, but it sells in England), tend to obscure the intellectual strength of evangelicalism as we meet it in, say, John Calvin, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, James Orr and B. B. Warfield. But to stress the reasonableness, coherence and explanatory power of evangelical belief, and to encourage competent apologetics, has in truth been the common evangelical way; anti-intellectualism is a defensive development, recent and uncharacteristic, a result of feeling swamped by prejudice, hurt by ridicule and outgunned in technical learning. It was marked among British evangelicals in all the churches between the two wars, but is vanishing as evangelical competence and nerve are regained.

These four claims set the perspective from which the six convictions that follow should be viewed.

### Evangelical fundamentals

These convictions are:

(1) The supremacy of Holy Scripture. Evangelicals explain the canonical status of the 66 biblical books in terms of their being both sufficient and self-interpreting (theologically, that is) as a guide from God on all matters of faith and practice. Evangelicals call the Bible the Word of God because, first, it was given by God through that special work of the Spirit called theopneustia (inspiration); second, its message, which emerges through the light that one passage throws on another, is God's word to the world; third, God speaks in and through this message to men's hearts. The Holy Spirit is the Bible's inspirer (by moving its authors to write what God wanted written to convey his truth), its identifier (by enabling the church to recognise which books were given to be canonical), and its interpreter (by showing Christians how the various elements of divine-human testimony in Scripture bear on their lives). The thinking of the biblical writers about God is taken as both source and control for ours; Scripture is enthroned as Christ's royal proclamation whereby he declares himself and directs us; and reformation - that is, correction and renewal - by the Word of God is seen as the only principle of spiritual life for either churches or individuals.

(2) The majesty of Jesus Christ. Evangelicals embrace the high Christology of the New Testament, which displays Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the second representative head of the race - God for man and man for God, as Barth put it. Evangelicals follow the New Testament in seeing Jesus' death as a sacrifice which covers sin, averts God's judicial anger, reconciles us to him and so redeems us from spiritual bondage and jeopardy. Evangelicals stress the Father's love in giving his Son to die and his power in raising Christ from the dead as proof that his sacrifice was accepted and his atoning work done, and they highlight justification - that is, God's once-

for-all remission of our sins and acceptance of our persons as righteous for Christ's sake - as the basic blessing of the gospel, a blessing which becomes a personal reality through faith which closes with God's promise by coming to the risen Christ as Saviour and Master. Evangelicals see the directing of worship, trust, obedience and love towards the incarnate Son as a natural and necessary element in Christian piety, and they labour to exalt the Mediator and hallow his name in every way they can.

(3) The lordship of the Holy Spirit. With the New Testament, evangelicals stress the sovereignty of the Spirit in giving understanding, evoking faith and assurance, inducing new birth, prompting prayer, creating fellowship, sustaining self-denial, changing Christians into Christ's moral image, empowering them for service, and quickening the church. The often-heard dictum that pneumatology (the doctrine of the Holy Spirit) is the Cinderella among doctrines may in the past have been true of other traditions, but it has never been true of evangelicalism, which has characteristically viewed the Christian life as life in the Spirit and the Christian church as the fellowship of the Spirit.

(4) The necessity of conversion. Contrary to what is sometimes thought, evangelicals as a body have never demanded that every Christian should have undergone a standard conversion experience; they have known the truth of Richard Baxter's dictum that 'God breaketh not all men's hearts alike'. But they have insisted that every Christian will show the marks of convertedness - active trust in God and an awareness of having met God and been changed by him, so that now one lives a 'turned' life - and where these marks are absent, even in orthodox, respectable, baptised churchgoers, evangelicals do not hesitate to conclude that conversion is still needed: that is, a turning to God in which Christ the Saviour comes and takes possession of one's life. Max Warren called this concept of indispensable conversion 'the citadel of Evangelical doctrine', and wrote of it thus:

'Begin by considering what the Evangelical means by conversion and before you know where you are you are face to face with the majesty and holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the divine compassion and the divine Redeemer, the new birth, the new life ...

'When the Evangelical speaks of conversion, and works and prays for conversion, he is concerned to promote a direct encounter between the Holy God and some man, some woman. That he should be in any way instrumental to this end is one of the most terrifying and sobering experience that an Evangelical can know. And yet very simply he believes that God works like that ... And what is this conversion? It is something that God does, not man. No one ever yet heard a man who had experienced an

Evangelical conversion say 'I have converted myself.' The verb is always in the passive, 'I have been converted.' Something has been done to me by another and that Other, God.' (What is an Evangelical?, London, Church Book Room Press, 1944, p. 23).

That is well said, and pinpoints what evangelical conversion is about. All that need be added is that in urging the necessity of conversion evangelicals stress most heavily the sinfulness, guilt, inability and lostness of fallen man. Wrote Bishop J. C. Ryle of Liverpool, an outstanding evangelical leader of a century ago: 'fruit-bearing Christianity' (he meant evangelicalism, as the context shows) 'has told men that they are born in sin, deserve God's wrath and condemnation, and are naturally inclined to do evil. It has never allowed that men and women are only weak and pitiable creatures, who can become good when they please, and make their own peace with God. On the contrary, it has steadily declared man's danger and vileness' (Principles for Churchmen, London, William Hunt, 1884, p. 452). From this characteristic emphasis flows both humility as regards oneself and compassion as regards others - which leads to our next point.

(5) The priority of evangelism. What the joy of being found does for an evangelical is to drive him out to find others. His wish to share Christ seems to him natural and normal. He knows himself to be under orders to go as a witness for Christ and make disciples (cf. Matt. 28. 18-20; Acts 1. 8; etc.), and he finds himself wanting to do it. Witness to others is to him one aspect of that responsive offering of heart and life to God which is the essence of worship. Peter says that God's people are to 'declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1 Pet. 2. 10). When asked if these words relate to worshipping God or witnessing to men, evangelicals want to say, both, and to identify the second as an aspect of the first. Warren wrote that 'this instinctive outward looking attitude' makes the evangelical 'alert to the Spirit of God calling out to fresh endeavours, revealing new areas of human life untouched by the Gospel,' and affirmed (he was addressing clergy): 'If you and I are being faithful in our ministry we too are seeing visions and dreaming dreams and reaching forth to those which are without' (pp. 20f.). Quite so.

(6) The importance of fellowship. The give and take of those who are in Christ as fellow-believers is for evangelicals vital to spiritual health, and is moreover the essence of church life. evangelicals are sometimes thought to have a weak view of the church, but this is a misunderstanding. What is true is that they see the church as first and foremost a community and an organism, in which matters of organisation, hierarchy, ritual nicety and canonical correctness are secondary and fellowship - realising togetherness, and ministering to others' needs - is primary. Evangelicals have a high



view of the ordained ministry as a personal pastorate, but a higher view of the church as a corporate priesthood in which all have equal access to God and are equally called to serve.

Such is evangelical Christianity, both within Anglicanism and outside it.

#### 4. WHERE WE ARE TODAY

WE have said that the Anglican evangelical identity problem has to do with adapting to change. As we labour to adjust to rapid cultural and social shifts around us, it becomes possible to wonder, with some non-Anglican evangelical observers, whether our convictions and purposes have not so altered that, however much we go on calling ourselves evangelicals, the reality of our evangelical identity is now lost. It becomes possible too for the sense of novelty so to swamp our minds that we lose touch with our own first principles and cry, with the domestic newspaper at the 1977 National Evangelical Anglican Congress at Nottingham, 'How can we know where we are going if we do not know who we are? What is an evangelical? Tell us, somebody, please.' The last chapter outlined the unchanging distinctives of evangelical- that is, as I for one believe, biblical, mainstream, normal and normative - Christianity, and the short answer to the question: who are we? is that we are the folk who try to live and act for God as these distinctives dictate. But to see what that involves we must come closer to contemporary facts, and take note of what has happened to Anglican evangelicalism in this century, particularly in recent years.

From 1900 to 1930 it can fairly be said that, by and large, Anglican evangelicalism was sinking. Not that it always looked that way, in the early days especially. On December 15, 1909, the editorial in the Guardian (a dignified, non-party Church newspaper, now defunct) declared: 'A new Evangelical party is in process of evolution ... The new type of Evangelical is full of life and energy ... He is eager to take a full share in Church life, and to develop it, if he can, on his own lines. He studies, writes, publishes books, even popular booklets, of great ability and wide range ... He believes in Church order, in discipline; he is imbued with the conviction that he is a member of a real Divine Society. For a movement with such ideals there is a future.' At that time something like a quarter of Anglican parishes were professedly evangelical, and the Church Missionary Society was one of the wonders of the Christian world. But Liberal Catholic dominance, under a galaxy of brilliant leaders, especially after the first world war, plus many experiences of division and defection in the evangelical camp due to the inroads of liberal thought about the Bible and the Cross, turned the mood of hopeful enterprise into one of disillusioned pessimism. Evangelicals of the older type withdrew into adventist speculation, cultural isolation and theological stagnation, leaving it to the liberals, evangelical and catholic, to think out the Church's role in a changing world. Victory in the Prayer Book debates of 1927-28 was in a deeper sense defeat, for it established an image of evangelicals as blind enemies of all change and made their name mud in the Church for many years. 'When in

1918 ... that great missionary, Canon W. E. S. Holland, toured England,' wrote Bishop Christopher Chavasse in his Foreword to Max Warren's pamphlet cited above, 'he was told by bishop after bishop that the future of the Church lay with the Evangelical school of thought. Ten years later, he returned on furlough from India to this country to find Evangelicals weak and discredited. They had split over the Bible and the Prayer Book.'

The next thirty years saw Anglican evangelicalism, one might say, bumping along the bottom. In evangelistic and missionary zeal, in the hallowing of personal and home life, in devotion to the Articles and the 1662 Prayer Book, clergy and laity of the thirties and forties were exemplary, but too often their piety was individualistic, their political and social opinions paternalist and backward-looking, their churchmanship a sort of established congregationalism, and their distrust of and disregard for biblical and theological scholarship almost pathological. The clergyman who stood up at an evangelical society meeting to say, 'Don't trust the bishops; they're wicked men,' and those who once tried to dissuade me from reading theology at the University lest I lose my faith, were not wholly untypical. But during the fifties pastoral and theological talent increased in both quantity and quality, largely through the work of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship among students; negative attitudes were revised, and a swing back from 'liberal' to 'definite' evangelicalism began. The Anglican Evangelical Group Movement and the Evangelical Fellowship for Theological Literature, the main 'liberal evangelical' organisations, languished while the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research, an IVF satellite, flourished. 'Definite' theological literature began to flow. A controversy about 'our English fundamentalism' in the mid-fifties showed that Anglican evangelicals had recovered some vigour and clout in debate, and the fruitfulness of Billy Graham's 1953 Harringay crusade electrified many with its demonstration of the continuing power of a plain biblical gospel. Clearly, there was life in the 'old paths' yet.

In the later fifties many young people became evangelical Christians. But the Protestant element in evangelicalism, which had been potent for a century, causing Anglo-Catholicism to be seen as a Romanist wolf in sheep's clothing and the 1928 Communion office as a disguised Mass, did not grab them. What they valued in the evangelical heritage as they received it was its emphasis on the Bible, on simple gospel doctrines personally applied, on intimacy with Jesus Christ whose divine friendship and presence supernaturalises all life, and on close fellowship among his followers. But most of these younger evangelicals did not see the Prayer Book as sacrosanct, and themselves as the bastion of national Protestantism against Roman invasion, in the way that their predecessors had done. To them Roman Catholicism appeared simply barren, Anglo-Catholicism simply senile and Britain simply pagan, and evangelism

was their passion. Their Anglican loyalty focussed less on the Church of England's official doctrines than on the plain fact that it was (as it still is) the best boat to fish from. The renewed interest during the fifties in Reformed theology and devotion touched only a few of them at anything more than surface level. Being activists rather than intellectuals (which is not to deny that many of them had good brains) they were more impressed by practical shrewdness than by theological strength, and they valued their own theologians more for the former quality than the latter. In this they contrasted strikingly with many of their non-Anglican evangelical contemporaries, for whom the Reformed revival came as both a summons and a source of strength to maintain traditional formulations of doctrine and church principles, and traditional polemical attitudes too, through thick and thin.

### Resurgence

The past twenty years has seen an unmistakable evangelical resurgence in the Church of England, of which the Keele Congress of a thousand in 1967 and the Nottingham Congress of two thousand in 1977 were two of the more striking public indications. During the same period world-wide evangelicalism in all denominations drew together impressively, with men like Billy Graham, John Stott and Carl Henry spearheading the process, and Anglican evangelicals both gave help to the Lausanne Congress on world evangelisation in 1974 and gained help from it. The Keele and Nottingham statements and the Lausanne Covenant give a fair idea of what Anglican evangelicals today are after. In brief, it seems that what the Guardian said of evangelicals in 1909 has once again become true. The name of the game is evangelistic outreach for conversions, along with the 'evangelicalising' of the whole church at all levels for renewal, plus the quest for proper ways to express a quickened social conscience. The movement is predominantly youthful; it is flexible and innovative; it has behind it some scholars, some rejuvenated theological colleges and a commercially viable publishing trade in its own paperback and periodical literature, so there is a steady supply of up-to-date resources. 'Definite' evangelicalism in the Church of England has made a come-back, under God, and looks as if it is here to stay.

Some changes are observable: we should note three. The first is a shift in style. As society has changed, becoming more casual and free-wheeling, more egalitarian and less hierarchical in outlook, so evangelicalism has changed with it. Evangelicals have largely forsaken the rather mannered and prim ways of their fathers for 'pop' styles in music, dress (including haircuts, or lack of them) and speech to men and God. Evangelicals prayed publicly in 'you-who' terms years before Series III services appeared, and it is they more than any who have claimed the guitar and the idioms of rock, folk and soul for the praises of Jesus Christ. Westward position, bright family worship and ad hoc liturgy of all sorts are now common,

and the old passion for keeping as close as possible to forms and words from the Prayer Book is clearly spent. Older evangelicals find the changes grating for a variety of reasons, but the belief that they are necessary if worship is to attract and be real and significant today, at least to the younger folk, is clearly the dominant view.

The second change is a shift in spirituality: that is, in the way that communion with God is viewed and practised. In Britain it is mostly evangelicals, and Anglican evangelicals in particular, who have been touched and invigorated by the charismatic stress on emotional freedom, spontaneity, ecstasy, glossolalic and prophetic utterance in the Spirit, miracles, spiritual gifts, dimensions and depths of healing, and varieties of God's communication to individuals as they open themselves to his love in the ministering body of Christ. To be sure, these emphases only reinforce elements that were there in the evangelical tradition before (though not always prominently or respectably, nor with the theological rationale that some charismatics give them). But by bringing them into the centre the charismatic reinforcement has effectively demoted and indeed elbowed away the zealous concern for 'sound doctrine', for continuity with the evangelical past, for personal and corporate purity of faith and life, and for a spirit of humble watchfulness against sin and self-deception, which formerly did so much to shape evangelical devotion; and by treating as normal rather than exceptional modes of God's dealing with us that are discontinuous with the natural and rational it has altered the temper of much evangelical piety, which formerly rested on the belief that we commune with God through the biting of our minds on his Word, that the non-rational in any form is suspect, and that it is near-fanatical to expect miracles with any frequency. Some urge that emotional charismatic corporateness, with its heightened expectations of divine intrusion, is justified by the New Testament and is a needed corrective of cerebral evangelical individualism; others reply that its own inner lopsidedness is in the long run hostile to virility and maturity in Christ. We need not here decide which view is truer, or whether (as I am inclined to think) there is truth in both; suffice it to note that the charismatic emphases have marked evangelical spirituality deeply.

The third change is a shift in ethics, from world-denial to world-acceptance (Charles Williams would have said, from the Way of negating to the Way of affirming images), and from social, political and cultural detachment to positive involvement in these areas for God's glory. A generation ago, 'separation from the world' and avoidance of 'worldliness' were (rightly) pressed as central to the Christian calling, and to explain what this meant a standard casuistry of recommended abstinences went the rounds, approximately as follows: Eschew theatre- and cinema-going, except to see Shakespeare and the classics; plays and films are trivial, and acting demoralises. Eschew ballroom dancing, for it is sexually inflaming

(though folk and country dancing, which involves less physical contact, is all right). Avoid reading novels and general literature (except for history and biography) beyond what one's academic and professional tasks require, for it is a waste of time and can corrupt. Do not drink alcohol in public, for this stumbles weaker brethren, nor in private, for drunkenness is always a danger and Christians do not need alcohol to pep them up. Do not play cards or other games of chance, for Luck is an idol and gambling, however small the stakes, is a great vice. Females should cut out cosmetics, fancy hair-dos, bright clothes and depilatory treatment, for this shows sinful pride in outward appearance; one index of unearthly inner beauty is dowdy dress and a bun. With this, indeed as part of it, went a casuistry of the professions: be a minister, missionary, teacher or doctor if you can, but don't touch politics (a dirty game) nor the arts (a world of decadence). How seriously all this was taken by some of its professed advocates is doubtful, but there is no doubt that it was taught. Now, however, the pendulum has swung the other way. 'Worldliness' has come to be defined (more accurately?) in terms of godless motives rather than of doing this or that, and it is recognised that abuse of something does not take away its proper use, nor is the use of Christian liberty identical with lawlessness or licence. In place of 1 John 2.15 ('Do not love the world') and Romans 12.2 ('Do not be conformed to this world') the guiding maxims are Genesis 1.28 ('Subdue . . . and have dominion', the so-called cultural mandate) and 1 Timothy 6.17 (God . . . furnishes us with everything to enjoy'), and what appeared as barbarianism is giving place to something more like humanism as a view of life, with corresponding entry into fields of thought and action which were previously taboo. This change has touched English evangelicals as a body, but Anglicans most of all. Some regret it as decadent, lax and 'worldly' in the old sense, but most welcome it as true advance in the service of God.

### Profile

Significant bodies of opinion usually have a strong sense of corporate identity and strong inner links, and Anglican evangelicals today are no exception. Their sense of togetherness and common purpose is fed by local and national structures for meeting and joint action (Diocesan Evangelical Fellowships, the Eclectic Society, Church Society, Church Pastoral-Aid Society, the Church of England Evangelical Council, local gatherings organised by Bible Society and missionary society auxiliaries, recurring residential conferences, etc.); also by literature which most of them read (the weekly Church of England Newspaper, the monthly Crusade publications from Falcon Books, Grove Books, Church Book Room and Vine Books, Marcham Books, Hodder and Stoughton, Inter-Varsity Press, etc.); also by their viewing certain folk as 'our leadership', and saying of other folk who might have been thought to come in that category, and maybe think they do, that they are 'not really with us'. Good or bad, these

things make for cohesion.

Critics sometimes say that today's evangelical Anglicans are utterly different from their fathers, but judging them by those evangelical essentials which we spelt out in chapter III one is struck most forcibly by the depth of continuity. That today's evangelicals understand themselves and their faith in essentially the same terms as did their fathers, and have essentially the same goals in life and ministry, seems too plain to be denied. But, just as a ship can only stay on course as the steering is adjusted to meet wind, tide, currents and other hazards, so Anglican evangelicals can only stay on course - that is, steadily pursue the defined goal of spreading pure Christianity, by God's power and for God's praise - by responding with appropriate adaptations to what goes on in the Church and the community around. This is the truth embedded in Newman's dictum (so objectionable, in the form in which he developed it) that to remain the same a thing must change often.

These adaptive responses must themselves be authentically evangelical - that is, they must consist of biblical principles applied as a means to fulfilling biblical purposes, and not be expressions of acquisitive or accommodating pragmatism which has lost sight of the end in view. On this all evangelicals would agree. But each new situation has to be evaluated in terms of its present ingredients and possible outcomes, and just because all men see all situations selectively, with different factors impressing different minds, evangelicals, attempting to apply the same principles of judgment to the same situation, still end up again and again with policy differences, just as politicians of the same party do: the root of the difference being, not varying principles, but partial vision. All that can be done about such differences is to discuss them, and see if any one debater can persuade any other that his estimate of the situation overlooks something. It is, in any case, a stimulus to thought to have different opinions flying round our ears, and the Holy Spirit who teaches us to love God with our minds could be disastrously quenched by total uniformity of views.

The following characteristics of Anglican evangelicals today, as compared with Anglican evangelicals fifty years ago, are however distinctive features of their profile.

1. Discriminating involvement in the Church's life.

This is something so natural, and so much to be expected, that it would not call for mention were it not that for half a century before Keele many evangelical clergy and congregations lived in a spirit of defensive isolation from the rest of the Church, and many non-Anglican evangelicals, knowing this, are sure that all Anglican evangelicals have a bad conscience about being part of the Church of England, and would like to leave it. But this is the opposite of what is true today.

Evangelicals have a positive commitment to the Church of England, based on its formularies, its history (or at least, the history of the gospel within it), its ethos of tolerance and trust, its openness to the Bible, and its possibilities tomorrow. When asked, as they sometimes are, under what circumstances they would leave the Church, they find the question so remote from reality, and therefore hard to answer, as a husband working hard and fruitfully at his marriage would find it were he asked under what circumstances he would divorce his wife. Also, they see that for the past thirty years God has been increasing their stake in the Church of England quite dramatically: perhaps a fifth of the clergy and parishes now have an evangelical commitment, as do a quarter of each year's ordinands, and perhaps half the Church's missionary work is in evangelical hands. Plainly, this is a time for renewed effort, not for contracting out. Since Keele, as during the decade before Keele in some cases, evangelicals have sought to share fully in the Church's inner life and debates, though not by any means as 'yes-men' to officialdom - as witness evangelical challenges in recent years to prayers for the departed in alternative services, to the proposed Anglican-Methodist Service of Reconciliation, to radical theology (so-called) in its various forms, and to naive euphoria about relations with the Roman Catholic Church. Latimer House itself is a resource-point for the formulation of constructive responses to official Anglican proposals, as well as for midwifing creative scholarship directed to present needs and perplexities on a broader front. That the Church of England leaves much to be desired, and needs to be reformed and renewed by God at many points is something on which Anglican evangelicals are unanimous. That they would rather preach, teach, live, work and pray for revival within the Anglican family than move elsewhere is something on which as a body they are agreed too.

## 2. Diversified vision and priorities.

Evangelicals, by reason of their stress on (not just the right, but) the duty of private judgment, have always been individualists to a degree; differences of temperament always produce different preferences and policies in all communities; and the fact of having re-established themselves in the Church as a force to be reckoned with has bred among evangelicals a sense of success - a mood which is regularly the mother of fragmentation, wherever it is found. It is no wonder, therefore, that evangelicals appear a good deal less cohesive a constituency than they did a decade back, and speak of themselves increasingly as a coalition rather than a party. The sense of common purpose in the Keele statement far exceeds that of the Nottingham statement, in whose seventy-odd pages the Articles are not mentioned once and, as is well known, cracks at the most unexpected points had to be papered over by verbiage. (Whether it was wise to issue a statement from Nottingham at all, and indeed to hold such a Congress at all, are proper questions, though not for treatment here.)



Nor is it any wonder that in particular debates, such as those concerning Prayer Book revision and alternative services, or Christian communication to outsiders, there should appear something of a polarization between 'conservationists' and 'innovationists', advocates of the dignity and depth which Anglican worship has achieved hitherto, and which demands language that is 'different', and protagonists of thorough-going identification with the thought and speech of the man in the street, even if that means settling for shallowness and loss of power. (No wonder either that exponents of both viewpoints should find the Series III compromises on this issue manageable without being in the least exciting - average liturgy, largely inoffensive but gawky and flat as a pancake.)

Nor is it surprising that, whereas progress so far makes some evangelicals increasingly anxious to press on and 'evangelicalise' the Church of England further, it has led others to settle contentedly for what they have got, so that now they 'make their contribution' to the Church without concerning themselves as to whether further and deeper changes in its ways are not now called for. Thus, while the total number of evangelicals in the Church increases, the number of campaigning evangelicals seems to decline. Whether this calm mood shows strength and statesmanship or sluggishness and myopia will be disputed. Linked with the calm mood, perhaps, is the fact that though there is much faithful pastoral care and outreach and great zeal to serve God (no doubt about that), today's Anglican evangelicals seem to have little prophetic vision about anything. Their effervescence often strikes the observer as bland and boyish, and complacent and naive to a degree - with exceptions, to be sure; but the exceptions are precisely not the norm. There was more vision and passion for the renewing of the Church to be seen in the sixties than can be detected now. Are the still waters running deep, or are they simply stagnant? Time will tell. But meantime, we note that here is another way in which evangelicals have diversified among themselves.

### 3. Dialogue with other positions.

A generation back, evangelical Anglicans by and large were in dialogue - that is, conversation taking both the topic and the other man seriously - only with each other and with fellow-evangelicals. When they listened to other professed Christians, it was not so much to learn from them as to controvert them and put them straight. The shadow of an unlovely intellectual perfectionism and self-sufficiency lay across this habit of mind; one can only be thankful that nowadays increasingly evangelicals listen to others in hope of benefiting by the exchange, as well as of sharing what they know with the other party. Their conviction (echoed, of course, by Roman Catholics and others, explain

it how you will) that God has given them a deposit of truth to guard, and their resolve not to let it slip away or be relativized or distorted, surely merits praise, but the assumption (hidden, yet potent) that evangelicals really have all the truth, and that God would never show Catholics or non-conservative Protestants anything that he had not first shown to evangelicals, making it needless for evangelicals ever to learn from those quarters, was really absurd, and it is a mercy that it is now so largely a thing of the past.

Some are puzzled that Anglican evangelicals should ever be found in dialogue with such as Roman Catholics, for officially Rome is committed to a long series of anti-evangelical positions (justification by baptism, transubstantiation and the mass-sacrifice, papal primacy and infallibility, the infallibility of the church and its identity with the papal communion, the immaculate conception and assumption of Mary, etc.), and since infallibility entails irreformability there is no apparent hope of change. But when individuals recognise a duty to explain and justify church doctrine from the Bible, as most Roman Catholic theologians nowadays profess to do, and the Orthodox and Anglican Catholics always did, there is a basis for much fruitful conversation by qualified persons, and who knows what will come out of it? The recent Open Letter on Anglican relations with the Roman Catholic Church and other non-reformed Churches, which Latimer House sponsored, and the paperback Across the Divide (by R. T. Beckwith, G. E. Duffield and J. I. Packer: Lyttelton Press, 1978) may be referred to here, as giving evidence of both the warrant for and the worthwhileness of exchanges of this kind.

## 5. LIVING WITH THE PROBLEM

ANGLICAN evangelicals have an identity-problem today because the whole Church of England has one. It is important to see this. At bottom the problem concerns doctrine. One would naturally hope and expect that in any Christian body having the size, status and resources of the Church of England doctrinal understanding would deepen over four centuries, and it would be ridiculous, indeed a denial of the promised ministry of the Holy Spirit as teacher, to expect doctrinal understanding anywhere simply to stand still for so long a period. But the way in which doctrinal discussion has developed in the Church of England, particularly in this century, has brought deep perplexities. A glance at the history will explain this.

The Church's sixteenth-century Articles and Prayer Book (for the 1662 book is just a light revision of Cranmer's 1552 book, as reinstated with three small changes in 1559) exhibit a reformed Augustinianism, carefully guarded against Roman Catholic and Anabaptist deviations. The Articles first spell out the Trinitarian and Christological faith of the ecumenical creeds, which are themselves commended not as traditional but as scriptural (I-V, VIII). Then the Articles articulate and apply six main Reformation theses, as follows: (1) Holy Scripture is sufficient for salvation and must be supreme in the church (VI-VIII, XX, XXI, XXXIV; cf. XVII, XXII, XXIV). (2) Fallen man's natural state is one of guilt, corruption and moral and spiritual inability (IX, X). (3) Justification, which is by faith only through Christ only, belongs to that total salvation which flows to us through divine power from its source in God's gracious predestinating choice (XI-XVIII). (4) Any company of believers among whom word and sacraments are duly ministered are God's church made visible (XIX). (5) The sacraments of the gospel become means of the grace they exhibit by inducing faith in the Christ who instituted them, and to whom they point (XXV; cf. XXVI-XXIX). (6) Since Christ's atoning sacrifice is a finished work, the eucharistic memorial of it is in no sense identical with it (XXXI). Prayer Book devotion expresses these positions liturgically.

Prior to this century there was domestic debate, on and off, on four questions which arise when interpreting the Articles. The first was the extent to which tradition (however conceived and delimited) can be trusted as a guide to what Scripture means. The second was the nature of justifying faith, which some Anglicans have defined as in effect a meritorious work of commitment, guying evangelicals the while for teaching justification by feeling (i. e., by a feeling of

being justified, which was how the critics mis-heard the evangelical doctrine of assured faith). The third was the effect of infant baptism, which some Anglicans saw as imparting a saving spark of divine life. The fourth was the sense in which in the eucharistic celebration Christ is present and the church offers sacrifice. But the outlines of Augustinian supernaturalism were not generally questioned in any radical way, though some 'Broad Church' descendants of the seventeenth-century Latitude-men had their doubts about original sin. No doubt Bishop J.C. Ryle, discussing the limits of comprehensiveness, was felt to be speaking from the middle of the Anglican road when he wrote in 1884:

'If . . . a man calling himself a Churchman deliberately denied the doctrine of the Trinity, or the proper deity of Christ, or the personality and work of the Holy Ghost, or the atonement and mediation of Christ, or the inspiration and divine authority of Scripture, or the inseparable connection of saving faith and holiness, or the obligation of the two sacraments, I cannot understand what he is doing in our ranks . . . common-sense seems to me to point out that he cannot conscientiously use our Prayer-book, and that he has certainly no right to occupy our pulpits and reading desks' (Principles for Churchmen, p. 37).

But since the twentieth century opened the Church of England has been having to ride out a whole series of storms raised by 'modernist' and 'radical' theologians, unruly children of English Broad Church and German liberal and existentialist Protestant parentage, who challenge the authority of the Trinitarian, Christological and soteriological thinking of the Bible at virtually every point. It is clear that the end is not yet, though it is also clear that since each such position is an unstable hybrid, the result of crossing current secular trends with current biblical hypotheses, none of them can last very long. Trends (fashions) and hypotheses (educated guesses) come and go, and whatever rested on them will go with them. (Who now recalls Rashdall, Major and Bishop Barnes? And does not Robinson's Honest to God already seem dated?) As Dean Inge saw and said, he who marries the spirit of the age will find himself a widower tomorrow. But what should be done about these heterodoxies during the short time of their blossoming? Anglicans, valuing scholarship, sure that truth is great and will prevail, remembering how Butler's Analogy put paid to the Deists of his day, and observing that Paul's initial reaction to error was to labour to correct it by argument, incline to hold that expert polemics, beating out the truth and exposing error for what it is, are the first thing to be desired, and hesitate to call for more action till the discipline of debate has had time to do its aperient work. It is evident that bishops in particular, despite their sometimes grandiose claims to be guardians of doctrine, hesitate to do more than hold the ring for debate, and when one thinks of possible consequences of a bishop withdrawing a clergyman's licence because he thinks the man is spreading mortal

heresy one sees why. But the awkward fact remains that while the Church through its leaders merely holds the ring, what the outsider and indeed the ordinary worshipper sees is a licensed pluralism of belief about basics (which some present-day sophisticates would defend not as a necessary evil but as a positive good, a sign not of incipient breakdown but of rude health). And to anyone whose Anglican allegiance depends at all on what the Church of England is constitutionally committed to stand for, this state of affairs brings chilling bewilderment and a painful sense that the Church's integrity and credibility are both in process of being lost.

This is the heart of the Church's identity-problem as evangelicals see it, and of their own as members of the Church. Is essential Anglicanism an English form of international evangelicalism, as the Articles in effect say, or (in Ryle's words) is 'the Church a kind of Noah's ark, within which every kind of opinion and creed shall dwell safe and undisturbed, and the only terms of communion shall be willingness to come inside and let your neighbour alone?' (*op. cit.*, p. xxiv). Is Anglican comprehensiveness a matter of not insisting on more than the gospel as a basis of fellowship, or of not insisting on the gospel at all? No outsider could be blamed for concluding that it is the second, for that is what you see when you look at the Church today.

Time was when Prayer Book uniformity could be invoked as a witness to the essential evangelicalism of the Church of England, for the Prayer Book, as was said, turns into praise and prayer the biblical fundamentals pinpointed at the Reformation and set forth in the Articles. (It should be remembered that Cranmer, architect of the 1552 Prayer Book, was also responsible for the first draft of the Articles that same year.) Now, however, this move is no longer possible. There is less uniformity in Anglican worship today than at any time since the Reformation, for the Pandora's box of experimental worship is open, and no likelihood appears at present of its ever being closed. The official alternative services differ from those of the Prayer Book in at least one basic way: Augustinianism being out of fashion, they 'go light' on the sinfulness, moral impotence, helplessness and lostness of man without God in Christ. They are brisk, bright services, touching on sin only perfunctorily. They are evidently not written for folk who want to tell God that the burden of their sins is intolerable - not, that is, for folk who have entered deeply and existentially (as surely Scripture leads us to do) into the spirit and self-awareness of Articles IX and X. But what one believes about grace, deep down, reflects what one believes about sin, deep down; so that Anglican worship has now become problematical to a degree, just as Anglican doctrine has, and one can no longer appeal to the Church's corporate worship as evidence that its corporate faith is that of the Articles. The Church's current worship leaves open the question, what Anglicanism is today, for the alternative services

can mean more or less, according to what is brought to them.

The sense that the communion to which we belong might be called 'Anglican Amorphous', on the model of Alcoholics Anonymous, is increased when one notes how in the ecumenical field Church of England representatives talk unity in all directions with an evident passion for pragmatic adjustments - and say different things in different churches! I was once entangled in diplomacy (call it that) with a man who regularly said different things to different people, as means of manipulating them. When the people started comparing notes, it became traumatic for both them and him. It pains evangelicals to see the Church of England inclined to behave that way - but of course nothing else is possible when basic Anglicanism has become fluid, and one man's idea of it is as good as another's.

Has the present pluralistic phase of Anglicanism come to stay, or is it a bad patch that the Church may in God's goodness come out of? Time alone will tell, but meantime the anxiety of thoughtful evangelicals, for whom the former alternative would be anathema, is and cannot but be acute. What are they to think of the empirical Anglicanism with which, according to Keele and Nottingham, they have so largely identified? The organisational pot - parish churches, bishops, the ordained ministry as a profession, diocesan quotas, etc. - remains without much change; but what strange brew is boiling up inside it? If the Christianity of the Church of England is in process of becoming something different from the dogmatic evangelical faith of the Articles, is not deep involvement in the set-up a bit perverse? And are not evangelicals themselves being changed by their sense of direction and their power to stand for the old paths? It is said that frogs in water that is being slowly heated show no awareness that their environment is changing, and no apparent discomfort, till suddenly movement stops and they are dead; may Anglican evangelicals be in a similar fatal process even now? This fear, as was hinted earlier, is widely felt, and some non-Anglican evangelicals of undoubted good faith play on it, thinking to awaken their Anglican brethren to their real peril before it is too late. Our remarks so far have been aimed at throwing light into the dark corners where this fear lurks. It is time now to draw the threads together in some closing points about how we should live with our situation as described.

First, we Anglican evangelicals must understand the psychology of our felt identity problem. Bewilderment and a sense of dis-orientation regularly results from being caught in situations where various things are changing together, so that the mind must handle several variables at once. For me at least, the physical counterpart is the spinning head I get from the conjunction of simultaneously changing sequences of coloured lights in amusement arcades. As in my schooldays, as a brightish boy regularly defeated by maths,

I would feel desperate and long to run away when my algebraic equations seemed to contain more undefined quantities than one could possibly determine (probably they did not, in fact, but that is how they seemed), so now in the Church of England, where a lot is changing at once, many feel panic and an impulse to run, for the situation seems out of control. The acuteness of our panic will vary, depending on how strongly our minds and hearts have taken up with the mental image of a constitutionally established Church of England which by rights should be as unchanging as God ('as it was in 1662, is now and ever shall be . . .'): Anglicans who were less idolatrous at this point can cope with change better. But this is my point: the easiest thing in the world is to interiorize this panicky feeling, and say that we feel swamped in the Church of England, and at sea, and like fish out of water, and honestly to think we have lost our grip on our evangelical identity (What is an evangelical? Tell us, somebody, please!), when our only real problem is that we find it hard to apply our familiar and firmly-held principles to what is going on around us. It may be, of course, that in the euphoric years since Keele some of us attended more to secondary things and theological hobbies and less to evangelical basics than was good for us; maybe our failure to reaffirm those basics at Nottingham testifies to this. Yet it seems clear that any sense of having lost touch with our evangelical identity is the emotional equivalent of an optical illusion. What is true is that we face a massive task of responding to changed and changing situations, which we must now get on with, as Nottingham rightly saw. Which leads to our next point.

Second, we Anglican evangelicals must affirm our identity by positive evaluative biblical thinking about our Church situation. Mental passivity in face of change ('I give up'), and jumping on band wagons because they are fashionable, are alike bad evangelicalism - bad stewardship, that is, of the truth entrusted to us to live by. For evangelicals live under a principle of authority - the rule of God in Christ through his Word interpreted by his Spirit - which requires them to 'test everything' (1 Thess. 5. 21) by allowing the God-given Scriptures to teach, reprove, correct and instruct in righteousness in relation to it (2 Tim. 3. 16 f.). Evangelicals' first loyalty is not to the Church of England as a going concern, to its 'mind' or any item in its tradition, but to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word. As men under this authority they are Anglicans partly, at least, because they see the Church of England bound by its foundation documents to live under the same authority, understood in the same terms, and as capable still, despite its constant and chronic derailments, of being brought to obey that authority more perfectly. At least, the Church places no restraints on those who seek to persuade it to go that way, and, as we have seen, evangelical strength in the Church of England has grown considerably in recent years. But now it is for evangelicals, with their Bibles in their hands, to use their liberty responsibly by positive critical evaluation of the Church's present state and positive corrective

proposals for the future.

This will involve grasping nettles - that of doctrinal discipline, for instance. Assuming what was said earlier about the need for scholarly debate against false views, what is the next step if the erring party proves incorrigible? If debate has sufficiently discredited his ideas in the Church's eyes, no more may be needed; but if not, and he is a clergyman and declines to resign, then some application of the 'non-reception' principle of 2 John 9-11 would seem to be called for. A. P. Baker quotes some words of John Stott: 'What should we do with heretics? ... I do not myself think a heresy trial is the right way. Heretics are slippery creatures. It is not easy to hook them. But ... is it too much to hope and pray that some bishop sometimes will have the courage to withdraw his licence from a presbyter who denies the Incarnation?' 'No', comments Baker, 'it is not too much to hope and pray (and not only the denial of the Incarnation; what about the denial of the physical resurrection of Christ?). How can the Church of England remain in the least credible if there is no discipline for even the most major heresies, and how can Evangelicals ... remain credible within it if they do not press for such discipline?' (Reformed Anglican Bulletin, October 1977, p. 14). Now the Church of England Evangelical Council has produced a pamphlet entitled Truth Error and Discipline in the Church (London, Vine Books, 1978) which contains this sentence: 'In the last resort (i) if a central Christian doctrine is at stake, (ii) if the clergyman concerned is not just questioning but denying it, (iii) if he is not just passing through a temporary period of uncertainty but has reached a settled conviction, and (iv) if he refuses to resign, then we believe the bishop ... should seriously consider withdrawing his licence or permission to teach in the church.' Here is one example of consistent biblical thinking in relation to one of the Church's present problems. More such thinking is called for.

Third, we Anglican evangelicals must affirm our identity by seeking spiritual revival in our Church. A. P. Baker notes that the 'in'-word today is renewal, 'meaning a kind of general re-vamping of local church worship, fellowship and structures to meet the needs of the present day. This is fair enough' (he continues) '... but it is dangerous if it becomes a substitute for Revival - that intensification by the Spirit of every part of His work in the life of the church, known above all by the presence of God Himself, and leading first to repentance among his people' (*op. cit.*, p. 16). Surely Baker is right. Only the notion of revival, thus conceived, is wide enough to express what biblical Christians should be seeking in the Church of England today.

With our one-track minds, we tend always to isolate this or that for exclusive consideration, and to talk as if the doing or stopping of some one thing was a complete prescription for the



restoring of full spiritual health. But this is like prescribing for an invalid a diet consisting wholly of butter or syrup of figs. Butter is a rich and nourishing foodstuff, and syrup of figs has its use, but you cannot live on either. Similarly, you would be wrong if you urged that more (or less) worship revision, pastoral reorganisation, charismatic experience, ecumenism, social action, evangelical bishops, or whatever, was a panacea for the Church's present malaise: not because no single one of these things is part of the story - some of them are - but because you would be treating whichever you selected as the be-all and end-all of spiritual recovery, which it is not.

As an evangelical trying to interpret what I see by Scripture, I am forced to believe that the Church of England is under judgment in these days for multiple unfaithfulness to the gospel, and that our overmastering need is for God to revive his work, and in wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3. 2; Ps. 85. 4-7); and that we should be seeking his face constantly for just this (cf. Ps. 44; Is. 64). I doubt whether any but evangelicals will endorse this emphasis, and I urge that maintaining it is one vital way in which our distinctive evangelical identity should find expression at the present time.

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